

**North Carolina Department of Transportation
Division of Highways
Traffic Engineering and Safety Systems Branch**

**STANDARD PRACTICE
for
Airport Signing**

The purpose of this standard practice is to establish minimum guidelines used for supplemental guide (directional) signing for qualifying airports. This practice specifies requirements for Commercial Service / Air Carrier and General Aviation airports. This practice is intended to restrict signing along NCDOT roadways for airports that do not generate a minimum level of traffic by unfamiliar motorists as determined by regularly scheduled flights available to the public or by total annual flights available to the public. Privately owned airports that are for private use only do not qualify for signs on NCDOT right-of-way. This standard practice is not intended to allow signing for the purpose of promotion or advertisement of airports. The intent is to set reasonable guidelines to promote statewide consistency in responses for airport signing requests.

It is the standard practice of NCDOT to install directional signs for Commercial Service / Air Carrier and General Aviation airports that meet the minimum criteria herein. Signs shall be designed, located and erected according to the standards of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), the North Carolina Supplement to the MUTCD, the North Carolina Roadway Standard Drawings, and the standards and criteria herein.

**SPECIFIC CRITERIA FOR COMMERCIAL SERVICE / AIR CARRIER AIRPORTS -
Same as COMMERCIAL PASSENGER AIR CARRIER AIRPORTS:**

(Also see GENERAL CRITERIA FOR ALL AIRPORT SIGNING beginning on page 4 of 5)

- To qualify for signing on NCDOT highway right-of-way, a **Commercial Service / Air Carrier Airport** must be regional in nature and must be served by at least one major commercial airline with daily scheduled passenger flights. [Click here](#) for **List of Commercial Service / Air Carrier Airports Eligible for Signing**. Contact the NCDOT Division of Aviation System Development Manager at 919-840-0112 to request review of an airport that is not currently on the list of eligible Commercial Service / Air Carrier Airports. After the Division of Aviation staff verifies that all criteria are met, they will notify Traffic Engineering and the list will be updated.
- Guide signing for **Commercial Service / Air Carrier Airports** may be installed on/from the nearest controlled access facility, not to exceed 15 miles from the airport. If requested, additional signs on other controlled access facilities within 15 miles from the airport must be reviewed on a case by case basis by the State Traffic Engineer. If approved by the Division Engineer, US, NC, or secondary road(s) that lead to the airport, may be signed, not to exceed 15 miles from the airport. See Attachment A for design typicals.

- Airport names may be used on signs on full control of access facilities for **Commercial Service / Air Carrier Airports**, as necessary, to ensure adequate identification for motorists. The airport name may be abbreviated to keep the sign to a reasonable size. The I-5 symbol with appropriate arrow panel should be used for ramp installations and trailblazing to **Commercial Service / Air Carrier Service Airports**.
- Signing for **Commercial Service / Air Carrier Airports** shall conform to the design typical shown on Attachment A.
- When lateral space is not available for a separate sign installation for a **Commercial Service / Air Carrier Airport** on the closest controlled access highway, the I-5 symbol sign may be installed above an existing ground mounted supplemental guide sign not to exceed 15 miles from the airport. See Attachment A.
- Signing on a controlled access highway for a **Commercial Service / Air Carrier Airport** may consist of the I-5 (minimum 30" x 30") symbol sign with a supplemental directional panel installed below the symbol with an appropriate message such as NEXT RIGHT, NEXT EXIT, OR EXIT XX. See Attachment A.
- Signs for **Commercial Service / Air Carrier Airports** are generally not permitted at full control of access facilities merging with other full control of access facilities (freeway to freeway interchanges) unless the interchange is the primary route to the airport. Any request for signing at a freeway to freeway interchange must be reviewed on a case by case basis by the State Traffic Engineer.
- All costs associated with the fabrication, installation and maintenance of the guide/directional signs for **Commercial Service / Air Carrier Airports** will be the responsibility of NCDOT Division of Highways. The availability of funding may affect the type of installation provided, such as use of the symbol in lieu of a separate installation including the name of the airport. The requester would be responsible for all costs associated with a name change on signs.

SPECIFIC CRITERIA FOR ALL GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORTS:

(Also see GENERAL CRITERIA FOR ALL AIRPORT SIGNING beginning on page 4 of 5)

- To qualify for signing, a **General Aviation Airport** must be open to general aircraft and should meet all of the following criteria:
 1. Shall be open to the motoring public a minimum of 8 hours per day, 7 days per week, 52 weeks a year, except federal holidays.
 2. Shall have public restrooms and drinking water available
 3. Shall have telephone available for use by the public
 4. Shall have adequate parking available for visitors
 5. Shall be routinely visited by unfamiliar motorists. This shall be documented in one of the following ways: 1) Airport shall have a minimum of 5,000 total documented

- flights/operations per year, including some charters or other flights available to the public; or 2) Airport must have a minimum of 6 weekly scheduled public flights (total of inbound and outbound), including charters or other flights available to the public. Private flights are not considered qualifying for signing purposes. Documentation shall be provided to the Department by the requesting airport.
6. Airport must have web site with map, directions, hours of operation, and public flights listed
 7. Unless recommended differently by the Division of Aviation and approved by the State Traffic Engineer, airport shall have paved runways, runway markings, and runway lighting all in acceptable condition as reported by Division of Aviation
 8. Airport shall be staffed with an attendant at all times the airport is operational
 9. Airport shall provide usual services (fuel, minor repairs, etc.) for transient aircraft during the hours the airport is operational
 10. Airport must provide facilities for overnight parking of aircraft. Due to local conditions, Division Engineer may require airport to provide tie-downs for any aircraft that requests overnight parking.
- [Click here](#) for **List of General Aviation Airports Eligible for Signing**. Contact the NCDOT Division of Aviation System Development Manager at 919-840-0112 to request review of an airport that is not currently on the list of General Aviation Airports eligible for signing on NCDOT highway right-of-way. After Division of Aviation verifies that all criteria are met, they will notify traffic Engineering and the list will be updated.
 - **General Aviation Airports** approved for signing may be reviewed at any time by Division of Highways and/or Division of Aviation staff to determine if the airport continues to meet all the requirements herein. Signs are subject to removal if the airport does not meet all criteria.
 - Guide signing for **General Aviation Airports** shall not be installed on freeways; however, signing for qualifying **General Aviation Airports** may be allowed on ramps from the nearest freeway not to exceed 5 miles from the airport, if a Commercial Service / Air Carrier Airport is not signed at the same interchange. Freeway signing is not allowed for General Aviation Airports due to the confusion signs may cause motorists looking for a Commercial Service / Air Carrier Service and the limited trips generated (traffic volume) by unfamiliar motorists looking for General Aviation Airports.
 - Guide signing for qualifying **General Aviation Airports** may be installed on the nearest expressway ramp/turn, not to exceed 5 miles from the airport, if the sign location is further than 25 miles from an exit/turn to a Commercial Service / Air Carrier Airport.
 - Signing for **General Aviation Airports** shall consist of installations using the I-5 panel. The name of a General Aviation airport is not permitted on signs within the NCDOT state highway right-of-way. See Attachment B.

- All costs associated with the fabrication, installation and maintenance of signs for public owned General Aviation Airports will be the responsibility the NCDOT – Division of Aviation.
- All costs associated with the fabrication, installation and maintenance of signs for private owned General Aviation Airports will be the responsibility the requesting airport or others (no funding provided by NCDOT).

PRIVATELY OWNED AIRPORTS FOR PRIVATE USE ONLY:

- Signing shall not be permitted for privately owned airports that are for private use only.

GENERAL CRITERIA FOR ALL AIRPORT SIGNING:

- For any qualifying airport, adequate trailblazing signing shall be used to guide the motorists from the first sign installation to the airport entrance. Trailblazing consists of I-5 (24" x 24") and appropriate arrow panels. See Attachments A and B for typical trailblazer designs.
- When the I-5 symbol sign is used, it shall be erected with the nose of the airplane pointing upward on all freeway installations and all installations that the I-5 symbol is used above a guide sign or with a supplemental directional panel such as NEXT RIGHT, NEXT EXIT, or EXIT XX. At trailblazing and ramp installations, the I-5 symbol may be installed rotated with the nose of the airplane pointing in the direction of the required turn. When the I-5 symbol is used on a ramp or as a trailblazer, an M-6 series (appropriate arrow panel) shall be installed below the symbol sign. The arrow panel is required regardless of the rotation.
- The I-5 symbol sign shall not be installed as a stand-alone sign (by itself). It must either be installed above a guide sign or with an arrow or directional panel installed below it.
- All requests for airport signing should be submitted to the appropriate Division Engineer, or designate, having jurisdiction in the county in which the signs are proposed. Requests for airport signing on partial and non-full control of access facilities must be approved by the appropriate Division Engineer, or designate. Requests for airport signing on full control of access facilities must be approved by the State Traffic Engineer.
- Airport guide signing on state highway right-of-way shall be limited to the designs shown on the attachments. No additional airport information or other airport related signing is allowed on state highway right-of-way.
- Approval and location of guide/directional signing for airports is dependent on the availability of longitudinal spacing along the roadway.
- Approval of routing to the airport is determined and/or approved by the appropriate Division Engineer, or designate.

- For the signs specified to be paid by the requester, an agreement between the Department of Transportation and the individual requesting the signs will be required including payment by the requester for all initial costs and future maintenance costs for the signs. Initial costs include design, administration, field investigation, materials, installation, and inspection. The signs are subject to removal if payment for maintenance has not been made to the Department within 60 days of written request from the Department. Any removal cost associated with non-payment will be the responsibility of the requester. Agreement will be cancelled upon sign removal, and any request for reinstallation will be handled as a new request. The request will not be reviewed until all past due monies are paid in full.
- For signs specified as paid for by the requester, the Division may require the requester to hire and pay a pre-qualified private contractor that is approved by the Department and licensed to work in North Carolina, to install and/or maintain the signs. All materials and workmanship must comply with the Department's current version of the Standard Specifications for Roads and Structures. Traffic control shall be in accordance with the MUTCD, North Carolina Supplement to the MUTCD, and the current version of the NCDOT Roadway Standard Drawings. The Contractor shall not be allowed to perform any work on weekends or Official State holidays, and any other times specified by the Division Engineer or State Traffic Engineer. The Contractor shall furnish Proof of Insurance prior to beginning work within the Department's Right of Way.
- The Department has the responsibility and authority to relocate or remove signs for a general aviation airport if a need for a higher priority regulatory, warning, guide sign, or specific signing program sign (Logo or TODS) is identified. No refund or reimbursement will be made for removed signs.
- The NCDOT reserves the right to cover, relocate, or remove any signs for maintenance or construction operations, or when deemed to be in the best interest of the NCDOT or the traveling public, without advance notice. The NCDOT reserves the right to remove signs when roadway improvements or changes in the roadway cross section or configuration will no longer accommodate the existing signs. No refund or reimbursement will be made for removed signs.
- This practice is not intended for use in removal of existing signs; however, when a new project is established for the North Carolina highway system, or when existing signs are in need of replacement, repair, or maintenance, conformance with this practice is required.
- As described in General Statute 136-30 (a), (b), and (d), the NCDOT has the authority to control all signs within the right of way of the State Highway System.

§ G.S. 136-30. Uniform signs and other traffic control devices on highways, streets, and public vehicular areas. (a) State Highway System. - The Department of Transportation may number and mark highways in the State highway system. All traffic signs and other traffic control devices placed on a highway in the State highway system must conform to the Uniform Manual. The Department of Transportation shall have the power to control all signs within the right-of-way of highways in the State highway system. The Department of Transportation may erect signs

directing persons to roads and places of importance. (b) Municipal Street System. - All traffic signs and other traffic control devices placed on a municipal street system street must conform to the appearance criteria of the Uniform Manual. All traffic control devices placed on a highway that is within the corporate limits of a municipality but is part of the State highway system must be approved by the Department of Transportation. (d) Definition. - As used in this section, the term "Uniform Manual" means the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways, published by the United States Department of Transportation, and any supplement to that Manual adopted by the North Carolina Department of Transportation.